

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

[BEGIN AUDIO]

INTERVIEWER: The following oral history interview was conducted on June 14, 1994 at 10:30, by the National Park Service American Memorial in Saipan. It was done in cooperation with [PH] Marianas Cable Vision. The subject is Marvin Delgado, veteran of the Marianas campaign. The interviewer is Daniel Martinez, Historian, USS Arizona Memorial. Good morning, Marvin. How are you?

MARVIN DELGADO: Good morning. Oh, pretty good. A little warm, but keeping busy on the visit here.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I have some questions I'd like to start off with. First of all, for the record, can you state your full name for us?

MARVIN DELGADO: Marvin A. Delgado.

INTERVIEWER: What does the A stand for?

MARVIN DELGADO: Anthony.

INTERVIEWER: How do you spell your last name?

MARVIN DELGADO: D-E-L-G-A-D-O.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you born?

MARVIN DELGADO: I was born in a little town in Chillicothe, Illinois – moved there as a baby – or as a little child, before school and settled in Peoria, Illinois. My dad worked for the railroad, there, in Peoria.

INTERVIEWER: What was the date of your birth?

MARVIN DELGADO: 21st of November, 1921.

INTERVIEWER: Your parents names, what were they?

MARVIN DELGADO: Grace and Isaac Delgado – both deceased now.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

MARVIN DELGADO: I have three brothers, five sisters, of that, just six are living now, back in Peoria.

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: Wow, big family.

MARVIN DELGADO: Big family, which was pretty common then.

INTERVIEWER: You say that six of the members of your family are still alive?

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] got Evelyn, Esther, Lucille, and then there's Joe and Mo – Moses – and myself still living, yeah. They live in Peoria.

INTERVIEWER: You say you grew up in Peoria?

MARVIN DELGADO: In Peoria, Illinois, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And went to school there and stuff?

MARVIN DELGADO: Went to school there – went to grade school and high school. High school – graduated from Woodruff High School, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Now, your background is Mexican American.

MARVIN DELGADO: Mexican American, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's unusual – to have a Mexican American family in the Midwest, isn't it?

MARVIN DELGADO: That's right. Yeah. There are only seven families there and mostly migrated up with the railroad. There's a big community over in [INAUDIBLE] Illinois and in Chillicothe, Illinois. Then, my dad [INAUDIBLE] they wanted him to work on the cars, there – freight or [INAUDIBLE] – in Peoria so [INAUDIBLE] brought him in there [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Very interesting you mention that – he worked on the freight cars and such. My grandfather [INAUDIBLE] he was a foreman because he could speak English and Spanish, in [SOUNDS LIKE] Lone Pine, California, working for the Southern Pacific Railroad. So it's very interesting. So they grew up in a little barrio called [INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: We were in what they called barrios in Chillicothe had boxcars as homes. Yet, my [INAUDIBLE] I was born in the house. Across a field there

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

[INAUDIBLE] houses and mine's still standing there. One of these days, I might go back there and buy it and just take it with me somewhere.

INTERVIEWER: Now presently, you reside in Oceanside, California?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oceanside, California. I retired out of the Marine Corps after 32 years and retired – General Carl Hoffman, who now has a band on a cruise ship because he's quite a trumpet player in the Marine Corps – he takes them on the senior cruises up to Alaska. [INAUDIBLE] give me the Caribbean and I'll [INAUDIBLE] but not Alaska. But he plays in a band there. He retired me. I see his name in different publications. I guess he's quite known in the Marine Corps.

INTERVIEWER: Sergeant Major, that's quite an achievement for an enlisted man.

MARVIN DELGADO: It is, but I had trouble making it. I was interviewed in Vietnam because I was still in the bush [INAUDIBLE] first sergeant and I been in the bush 25 years before that at Guadalcanal. So [INAUDIBLE] how life was. Well, I guess I overspoke myself, so they kept eyeballing and said, "Well, we'll promote him later – later," and it become two or three times later before I –

INTERVIEWER: What did you say that aroused such an interest?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, I told the war from the perspective of the media were taking – the type of fight we were subject to, they weren't subject to in World War II. You might call it –

INTERVIEWER: So you did a comparison.

MARVIN DELGADO: Comparison – the back then to here, which is different. We had a lot of different things that were made to – we were made to fight at within Vietnam, which we were free when we fought the Japanese [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: There was more restrictions in Vietnam than there was –

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: More restrictions [INAUDIBLE]. It affected everyone, not only me – the generals right on down to the lowest NCO. But that's the way things went [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it was a political war.

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, yeah, it –

INTERVIEWER: Well, let's talk about this military experience. How did you come to be involved in the military? How did that start?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, the war hit I was in a theater in my hometown with my girlfriend, Rosemary [INAUDIBLE] that's when they sold papers in the street and they was all hollering, "Extra, Extra." Somebody had bombed Pearl Harbor. No one knew – ever heard of it, which is [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: You didn't know where Pearl Harbor was?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, no. I had no – didn't even know where Hawaii was at, back in Peoria. So then, actually, everybody got enthused about it. So there were three of us – John Winslow, who joined the Navy [INAUDIBLE] John Winslow [INAUDIBLE] behind him and then Louie [INAUDIBLE] and myself went down. So we hit the Army and the Army had said – no, it wasn't [INAUDIBLE] it was Jimmy Franks, Louie [INAUDIBLE] and myself. Went down – and so we went to the Army recruiter first. We all wanted to be paratroopers because that's what the come on was. So then, I happened to ask the guy – he started filling papers out on us, and I said, "What happens if we don't qualify as paratroopers?" Oh, you'll stay as an infantryman in the Army. I said, "What's that?" He said, "Well, that's the guy [INAUDIBLE] the rifle and walks on land." I don't want no part of that. I want to jump out of airplanes. So Jimmy went ahead and went through it and become a paratrooper and got captured his first jump in [INAUDIBLE] in Europe.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, he was captured by the Germans [INAUDIBLE]

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: And he was frozen and shot – a lot of them were shot in those sheds there at [INAUDIBLE]. Anyhow, he never got to [INAUDIBLE] they shot him coming down, captured him. We used to tease him a lot [INAUDIBLE] because he says, “I’ll ride around here while you’re [INAUDIBLE] on foot. Which was true. I said but I was a [INAUDIBLE] unless I come through it, killed a few of them on the way. We kid each other after the things – how he laid in prison camp. But then, we went down and got in the Marine Corps – recruiter – and all we done was walk. Jimmy rubbed it in. You really walked now, even though you won’t qualify as a paratrooper, in the Army, you’d be a ground pounder.

INTERVIEWER: But why the Marine Corps?

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] that’s about it. We didn’t know anything about the background of the Marine Corps or the history – the [INAUDIBLE] part that I’ve learned, now through the years.

INTERVIEWER: You just wanted to enlist.

MARVIN DELGADO: Enlist, yeah, because the war’s going on. So I enlisted in July – actually [INAUDIBLE] July 2 of ’42. I went to boot camp in San Diego, and from there I went to what they call [INAUDIBLE] training. There was no training, just get together at Camp Elliot, which is now Miramar, and they had no Camp Pendleton there, so we went right over to [INAUDIBLE] and run by the scum of the world. They didn’t know what they were – all kinds of foreign looking little people running it [INAUDIBLE] Sumatra, Filipinos [INAUDIBLE] but all small people. It was just like a prison ship. It was stacked six high, stunk, water was on decks. We’d go in chow lines that were [INAUDIBLE] heave in it from being sick in it and it would wash out the side of the ship and out to the water in front. It was a mess [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Where did you get on this ship at?

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] San Diego. It’s a Dutch freighter.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: To take you to Hawaii?

MARVIN DELGADO: To take us to the war. We actually went off – we were going, basically, to Guadalcanal, but we transferred ships – I’m trying to think where [INAUDIBLE] we got off the [INAUDIBLE] in Wellington, New Zealand. Then, we got a regular American warship to take us to Guadalcanal. Now, we stopped on the way over to let off people – Army guys – at Fuji – Marine Corps people in Samoa. We got off at Samoa to stretch our legs and there was nothing but natives, there – grass skirts or [INAUDIBLE]. The minister had –

INTERVIEWER: Kind of what you pictured the islands to be?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. Then, as we got in deeper, the missionaries put the clothes on them. They don’t want them to be bare breasted [INAUDIBLE] women, but they were still bare breasted and we just saw another island. But the missionaries were working on it.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the first time you saw bare-breasted women in –

MARVIN DELGADO: Definitely [INAUDIBLE]. Well actually, the first time, also, we saw a person sitting there with great big legs, like that – big legs. They had what they call elephantitis – filariasis, they called it. They still have it – not to that extreme, but we’d have women with big breasts, way out there, with that disease. We’d look odd – inquisitive, nosy people looking – staring.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you then?

MARVIN DELGADO: I was – I’m trying to think – between 18 and 19 because I had a birthday the morning we went ashore at [INAUDIBLE] I could have died on my birthday. But getting back to the other story, though, we went to [INAUDIBLE] Samoa and we immediately went in the brush and [INAUDIBLE] up to look for Japanese. The Air Force had listening stations there and they were manning part of the island. They had Marine [INAUDIBLE] there. We weren’t even associated [INAUDIBLE]. We just

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

went out and walked and come back aboard ship and saw people. [INAUDIBLE] men – old folks – just stared at us because we're headed for war, all dressed up, with the helmet and the –

INTERVIEWER: All the accompanying gear.

MARVIN DELGADO: Well then, we had no [INAUDIBLE]. We had just dungaree top and the belt and trousers and raggedy shoes and whatnot – the boondockers. Of course – and then the children were laughing, giving us remark. I don't know if I can say it on TV or not? Will it be cut out or not?

INTERVIEWER: No, go ahead.

MARVIN DELGADO: It was [INAUDIBLE]. Years later, in California, I'm a godfather – a lot of Samoans, there. So one day, I told what they were saying and they all laughed. It's a bad thing.

INTERVIEWER: What's it translate to?

MARVIN DELGADO: F-U Marines. The kids were saying that to us. I said, "What?" They all laughed. Since then, I've heard that the other people went through the same thing – native kids – but I think some sailor taught them that to say to the Marines. [INAUDIBLE] some sailors got there and told them because they'd do – they would joke like that in all the Pacific – set us up because they was everywhere.

INTERVIEWER: Well, can we just go back a little – page back a little. I want to page back to – here you are, you're a Mexican American kid. You're raised in the Midwest. You join the Marine Corps – one of the toughest outfits in American history – and all of a sudden, you're headed to the West Coast and you've got some DI looking at you and gonna straighten you out. What was that like? What was your training like?

MARVIN DELGADO: Now, looking back on – I have never known discrimination. There was no such thing. I was only – when I was in boot camp, I was the only

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

Mexican there [INAUDIBLE] there were Italians in there [INAUDIBLE] but our DI was old Woodfin and the junior was Price and Peacock.

INTERVIEWER: So your drill instructor's name was Woodfin?

MARVIN DELGADO: Woodfin. He was a staff sergeant. He'd [INAUDIBLE] pick on me to hit me because Don Winslow, who joined the Navy, would always send me a letter and he put a little joke picture up there.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of picture?

MARVIN DELGADO: A joke picture – gung ho picture – a little drawing in there [INAUDIBLE] Marine Corps type. Delgado get up here – pow – he'd give me my letter.

INTERVIEWER: Where would he strike you?

MARVIN DELGADO: In the butt or on the top of the head with his stick. We had helmets on, as boots. Hit me there, he said, "Here's your mail."

INTERVIEWER: With his swagger stick?

MARVIN DELGADO: With a swagger stick. He wasn't physically beating me to beat me [INAUDIBLE] it was all common stuff in those days. Now, they don't even – they might backhand a guy, but it was fun. It was a form of learning discipline and they [INAUDIBLE] you had to be [INAUDIBLE] from a civilian kid into a hard military kid to fight in these islands. Because in boot camp, it was hard. It was rough; it was mean. [INAUDIBLE] and then when we got out of there and went to [INAUDIBLE] we saw a couple guys come back from Guadalcanal just for the purpose – they'd been wounded – they looked bad and they told the hard part of life at Guadalcanal. We're thinking, "Man, we're going into something like that?" Because they come back skinny, [INAUDIBLE] looking – just kids. He said, "Well, you'll be looking like this when you get there and go on land," which happened. But this – all we did was walk and hike. We'd hike to Greens Farm, Jacks Farm, out of Camp Elliot. That's all we

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

done. Got aboard that Dutch ship, then, with all our gear. [INAUDIBLE] we knew each other because we stayed in huts with two squads – 12-man squads.

INTERVIEWER: The Quonset-type huts?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, they were square ones.

INTERVIEWER: Square huts?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. Then, you knew them people personally. You never knew the other people in your platoon – none of the people [INAUDIBLE] until you got aboard ship and you mingled with [INAUDIBLE] and you had formation and knew each other. But basically, I got to know just the people in my two squads. Then, it was a squad that [INAUDIBLE] were in the squad [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Now this is 50 years ago. You remember these guys' names like it was yesterday.

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, from this picture, here [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Well, why don't you show us the picture?

MARVIN DELGADO: This picture was taken going to [INAUDIBLE], before I got wounded, and then how it was taken, I don't know, but this here – I've been able to remember –

[OVERLAPPING]

INTERVIEWER: Right up like that. That's good. This is – you told me this is you. I'm pointing right to you, right there.

MARVIN DELGADO: This is – I can down the line, if I can see it, here. Back there, there's Carruthers, there's [PH] E.D. Hall, there's Johnson, there's Bane and Baylor, there's Workman; on this end, Savio, [INAUDIBLE] on this side. I don't want to identify [INAUDIBLE] and then there's Hodge [INAUDIBLE] Navy Cross on the tank [INAUDIBLE] down here when he was [INAUDIBLE] trying to drive us off the island. There's Lieutenant [PH] Lighter that got hit, with us. There's Larson, there's Henrichs

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

and there's Brumley. But these are the guys I can't identify. I'm trying to. I've identified most of them, here.

INTERVIEWER: Where was this photo taken?

MARVIN DELGADO: This was taken going up [INAUDIBLE] because [INAUDIBLE] was shot in the head. Me and Clem stayed with him in the valley. He was passed out. We got down in a little draw or a valley, on our side of it, going up. The other side was [INAUDIBLE] by Japanese. They kept – he'd come to and scream, then it got dark and the Japanese would shoot down there trying to silence us. They didn't know who all was with him, but they knew the guy was down there hollering. He'd pass out again. We'd put our hand over his mouth. I thought it was just our sweat – morning we found out it was nothing but blood. He was all full of blood [INAUDIBLE] like hell. Then, we kept going up. I was walking along with a guy by the name of – Louisiana – I'll think of his name in a few minutes because I just mentioned him. I got hit. You automatically are taught to roll over because the sniper or the rifle that got me [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: You can bring that down.

MARVIN DELGADO: He kept shooting down there, looking for me.

INTERVIEWER: Where'd you get hit?

MARVIN DELGADO: I got hit here, here and part of [INAUDIBLE] here, but I got hit here bad. It was all tore open. It's all shrunk up.

INTERVIEWER: You got hit with a rifle round?

MARVIN DELGADO: A rifle round – 30 caliber.

INTERVIEWER: Did it pass through?

MARVIN DELGADO: Passed through [INAUDIBLE] passed through. I don't [INAUDIBLE] broke the bone, just get it past the bone and just meat mostly. I don't

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

know how the graze come here. [INAUDIBLE] shrapnel, down at the beach [INAUDIBLE] above your head [INAUDIBLE]. In those days [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: What's that?

MARVIN DELGADO: If you didn't get a bad one, a big one – we got hit – scratches, we call them [INAUDIBLE] scratch on your body. In those days, they didn't because I got peppered here and peppered here with little fragments, but no actually wound. You weren't even treated. Sometimes it didn't bleed. It happened a lot for the fine shrapnel. Sometimes [INAUDIBLE] hey, it's only a scratch [INAUDIBLE]. This – I can't think of the – in Louisiana, but I'll get – anyhow, he went running. He says, "Apache." I was nicknamed Apache. I don't know why. He done it to me. He went running back [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: You had a nickname and it was Apache?

MARVIN DELGADO: Apache. He called me Apache. [INAUDIBLE] called me – it was Apache.

INTERVIEWER: Any other nicknames you had?

MARVIN DELGADO: My mother had some Apache in her [INAUDIBLE] Indian lady. Well, we're Mexican, but dad - [INAUDIBLE] they're all a mixture of the [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Mexicans are partially Indian, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: So he went around behind the tree and saw the guy, and then killed him, and then come down and drug me a little ways down, and then over behind a little knoll and then he kept going. [PH] Fouche was the guy's name – Louisiana – Fouche.

INTERVIEWER: Fouche?

MARVIN DELGADO: Fouche was the guy's name that killed the guy that – the Jap that – the Japanese that hit me.

INTERVIEWER: How far was this soldier that shot you? How far away?

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: He was only from – he was in a tree – in the crotch of a tree, taking cover, just about, maybe – he actually [INAUDIBLE] killed me. He was actually, maybe, in front of me about 20-30 yards. What happened is, when he hit me, I went down on my face. I thought I was blind. I thought I got hit in the face – in the eyes. I always feared getting hit in the eyes and being blind. [INAUDIBLE] I don't mind arms and stuff, but I only thought of that. There was so many bullets around that you thought of that. What happened is I fell on my face. Tears come because when Fouche killed him and come to running me, I said, "Fouche he hit me in the [INAUDIBLE] lying son of a gun, this and that. He says, "I'm blind." [INAUDIBLE] you're all right, Apache – this and that. I says, "Well, what's wrong?" He wiped me, and what happened is when we're on the ground going up – crawling up this area [INAUDIBLE] all up and down line guys [INAUDIBLE] you had maybe 10-15 yards in between people going up in that area. You're taught to slowly raise up, look that way – just your head go that way [INAUDIBLE] rifle ready. This day, I happened to pop my head up and he shot at my head and hit me in here and [INAUDIBLE] down in here.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, so it passed underneath you?

MARVIN DELGADO: Passed underneath me, yeah. It was meant to pass right through to my head [INAUDIBLE] and go through me. I screwed up because actually, you're supposed to [INAUDIBLE] slow [INAUDIBLE] but it's good I did because [INAUDIBLE]. I rolled over, he run and got the guy, and then he come back to me [INAUDIBLE] you're all right, now. He wiped the tears [INAUDIBLE] and I didn't know where I was hit. It was all numb. When you get hit, you're numb a lot. I felt no pain.

INTERVIEWER: You're kidding.

MARVIN DELGADO: I felt no pain 'til I got up and I fell down, and they says, "Hey, you're wounded [INAUDIBLE]." There it was, the hole through my trousers and all the blood down there.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: Did it break the bone?

MARVIN DELGADO: No. It bounced off the bone, but it tore all the flesh. Then, he drug me down there just to get out of the way of things, then he kept going. A guy come up and pulled me down to behind another ridge. They had a tent set up where they had all the wounded in there. They checked me over. They tagged me. The corpsman tagged me for morphine and stuff – my name and all that, the kind of wound I had. This guy drug me back there who – I don't want to get [INAUDIBLE] but he's right here, now [INAUDIBLE] is the guy's name – just saw him last night.

INTERVIEWER: Is that right?

MARVIN DELGADO: I saw him in North Carolina a couple years ago, but I lost his name and all that – the first time I'd seen him in [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: He's the one that pulled you to the hospital?

MARVIN DELGADO: Pulled me to the hospital – I might as well tell the story [INAUDIBLE]. He [INAUDIBLE] down there and they checked me in the tent. I didn't know it was [PH] Sheck – didn't know from Adam – just a guy, but it was Sheck because he told me who he was years later, when I met him 40 some years ago – or four years ago – three years ago in Camp [PH] Lejeune [INAUDIBLE]. They put me on the stretcher. They were working on people that got wounded bad in the chest, in the head, or really a bad [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Severe wounds.

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. [INAUDIBLE] and I'm sitting there watching them all going, just like a spectator, laying in the stretcher right there beside. All of a sudden, I let out a scream. It was like a hot poker was in me, burning me. They all knew what happened. The morphine wore off. They dashed over and shot me, and they continued [INAUDIBLE]. That was the last time I ever felt pain, even when they took

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

me down to Kauai to wash my wound out, and really – they wanted to take my leg off first because I had gangrene, went over to Madagascar –

INTERVIEWER: Wait a second. Wait a second. They wanted to take your leg off because you had gangrene in there?

MARVIN DELGADO: Gangrene after, from this, but that was later, though, not here. That was down in Kauai when they flew me down there – the Army doctors and nurses they had down there. Because they evacuated the [INAUDIBLE] to [INAUDIBLE] Johnson Island and then into [INAUDIBLE].

INTERVIEWER: So you were being staged out, and in the process of mending, gangrene set in.

MARVIN DELGADO: No, gangrene set in when we – I come back to [INAUDIBLE] and I went over to – we call it Madagascar. Now, there's another – and I got salt water and that, and then laid around there. Then, I got involved in that [INAUDIBLE] down on the beach, down there, off of [INAUDIBLE]. Then, I guess [INAUDIBLE] turned to gangrene and my leg turned black and blue here.

INTERVIEWER: So let me get this straight, Marvin. You got wounded. You go to the hospital. They patch you up. You go out with wrapped wounds and you're back into combat again?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And during the process of combat –

MARVIN DELGADO: Got in that salt water going over to Madagascar.

INTERVIEWER: And then you got gangrene in there and you almost lost your leg.

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, I didn't know [INAUDIBLE] leg getting that bad.

[OVERLAPPING]

MARVIN DELGADO: The [PH] Chamarros [INAUDIBLE] Chamarros that this – through him – they come down and saw me off [INAUDIBLE] laid down there at the

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

strip. It was just a crew thing – part of the radio station there and the air strip down there. They come down and saw me off and took me to – from here to [INAUDIBLE], just dressed the wound, and then took me to [INAUDIBLE]. Then, it was bad, then. The doctor said, “That’s got to come off.” So I begged and begged him not to. I missed the plane load going out of there. They kept me there overnight, and then they cleaned it all out and sent me to Johnson Island for a layover there – fuel layover – and then into [INAUDIBLE]. Once they got me into [INAUDIBLE], they went ahead and carved everything out – cleaned everything out. I was in [INAUDIBLE] for six months and they took what I saw was cotton candy – what it was, it was blood [INAUDIBLE] they put a cast over it with a door there and they would moisten it every day [INAUDIBLE] and then they took the cast off, here – still just laying in bed, there – and then, eventually, it was like red jelly in there, looked like. Then, it actually healed over. I could have probably have walked, but it’d tore everything. So I laid there and I was able – it was another long story in that hospital. Okay, let’s go back here.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s page back a little. Wonderful story – unbelievable. When you’re on your way – your first combat that you were ever involved in took place where?

MARVIN DELGADO: At Guadalcanal. We came in there – in fact, when we were in boot camp, I went to Camp Elliot to pick out rifles, to get [INAUDIBLE] –

INTERVIEWER: Was that in 1942?

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] they told us in boot camp – they landed while I was in boot camp – here – made the landing in August. They DI says [INAUDIBLE] he says, “You guys are gonna have your boot camp shortened to 6½ weeks. You’re going to Guadalcanal and help them people out there.” We thought – these are kids,

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

you know how they're scared and all that. Hell, no. Six days later, we was up at Camp Elliot getting all our gear.

INTERVIEWER: And there you were; you were on your way.

MARVIN DELGADO: And then we were on that Dutch ship going to Guadalcanal.

INTERVIEWER: And in those early days, they didn't have all the transports that they would later have in '43 and '44.

MARVIN DELGADO: Now, some guys over – went on the [INAUDIBLE] the cruise ship [INAUDIBLE]. We get on that Dutch ship. I call it a Dutch prison ship. [INAUDIBLE] was the name of the ship – HMS [PH] Brostasia – old Dutch ship with an old sea captain. You're out there on the deck – it's some kind of cargo-like ship and the hold six deep – they just cram them in there. He would walk every day – every evening – never talking to nobody – big old fat man, never come down among us peons. The officers had their side, but they all lived like animals. We all lived like that. Nobody thought anything of it. It was [INAUDIBLE] at first because we'd never been like that.

INTERVIEWER: Had you ever been to sea before?

MARVIN DELGADO: I'd never saw the sea.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get seasick?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, never got sick. The only time I got seasick is going into [PH] Tararo for the landing – bad I got seasick, then.

INTERVIEWER: Well, we'll get to Tararo, but that must have been quite an experience for a young kid to see all of this ocean.

MARVIN DELGADO: I never saw Japanese – never knew what they looked like. First one I killed, I thought I killed a kid, he was so small. Our lieutenant – [PH] Seeds – had been raised here in California – went to [INAUDIBLE]. He says, "That's the guys

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

you're fighting." I said, "Them little guys?" Yeah. Them little guys put us through hell because they were seasoned veterans from Manchuria. They knew –

INTERVIEWER: The ones at Guadalcanal were front-line combat troops.

MARVIN DELGADO: That's right, yeah, because they were the brunt invasion troop. After the Imperial Marines that we killed in [INAUDIBLE] made the landing, then they'd come in. What really stumps us, to this day, is how [INAUDIBLE] come out of little towns, never gone to war, adapt to jungle and overwhelm an enemy like that. They were good [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: It's hard to talk about, for a lot of veterans, objectively about the Japanese. But it appears that you can look at them from a military point of view. What kind of soldiers were we up against out here?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, first of all, they were fanatics. [INAUDIBLE] two of them I was in. The bad one is down the beach [INAUDIBLE] and they weren't afraid to die. This will be edited, right – this whole thing [INAUDIBLE]. The [INAUDIBLE] down here on the beach.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we hold off on that.

MARVIN DELGADO: Okay because that's the story [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to Guadalcanal. We'll finish off there and we'll kind of chronologically progress. We'll save that story. Getting back to my point – it appears to me that the Marine Corps – a very fine fighting unit, and sometimes referred to by people as fanatics, but dedicated. The Japanese, were they that type of soldier – dedicated to their craft?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, very definitely. They had no [INAUDIBLE]. Some of them come at us, there were others tattered and beat, but they weren't about to give [INAUDIBLE]. Now, we saw a picture one time – a small *Time* magazine [INAUDIBLE] – and they showed long lines of Italians and Germans surrendering and we thought

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

surrendering? What's that? Nobody thought – we'd have never surrendered. They would never surrender. Later, we did see – I didn't, in my area [INAUDIBLE] but I guy came up with a white flag. They had a big ambush at Guadalcanal, there, where all the staff – the Marine Corps staff – got killed on an ambush at the [INAUDIBLE] Valley. We retook it. They drew back because they didn't have enough people, so we retook a lot of stuff when we come in as replacements and everything. But one thing about coming in here – oh, no, at Guadalcanal – we come off of little boats. We had to just hop over the side. There were no combat land boats.

INTERVIEWER: They weren't landing craft like you would see [INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. They had about, maybe, 20 people and they made you jump off, there. In the shoreline were people sitting there, horrible looking, like skeletons – beady eyes, sunk-in faces, pock-marked, scrawny hair. [INAUDIBLE] fresh troops, nice dungarees, clean shaven, everything else.

INTERVIEWER: Pretty robust men, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah and we see all these people in the beaches – all of them are [INAUDIBLE]. We said, "What happened to you guys?" Well, nothing. They said, "We turned this way by living in this rotten place, here." The smell of death all the time. We were in the grove. We landed there. We landed at the [INAUDIBLE] big battle [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: [INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: Seabees all set up were all over there with their equipment and stuff, helping us [INAUDIBLE]. We landed in there and we saw these people [INAUDIBLE]. One of them says we'll be looking like that in a month, and we says, "No way." In a month's time, we were looking exactly like that.

INTERVIEWER: Because food wasn't good, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: Not only that, but the conditions.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: The bugs?

MARVIN DELGADO: Anywhere you go in this Marine Corps, to fight, you're not gonna fight an enemy – he's nothing. You fight the elements of their locale, and out here was jungle. That is – you pick up – we all caught Malaria. In fact, that was – the last man to get attacked by malaria – Carruthers was that picture, there – never did have – everybody else come down. Malaria hits you different ways. You could go skin and bones. You could turn all yellow from the [PH] they put you in place of quinine because we didn't have it. Or else you would go blind or you would go crazy. There's a lot of things that happened to you on malaria [INAUDIBLE]. It hit different ways. [INAUDIBLE] to disease. A lot of people picked up all kinds of disease – [INAUDIBLE], jaundice, ulcers and whatnot – body ulcers. It was according to the makeup of your body. Farm kids [INAUDIBLE] good, out here, in jungles – outdoor kids.

INTERVIEWER: Farm kids.

MARVIN DELGADO: Farm kids [INAUDIBLE] good. Dark complected – well, I was the only one, but I held off a lot of disease. White kids – the poor, old red-headed guy [INAUDIBLE] as an example. All the time he was here, he had salve on his nose, salve right here on his hands, on his forehead. [INAUDIBLE] at Camp Lejeune, as an officer – he'd made officer. I was getting ready to come back after the Okinawa war. Still had [INAUDIBLE] I said, "Guy, what you doing?" He says, "I don't know. They give it to me. They thought I was qualified." I said, "Hey, you're still broken out." That was two-three years later [INAUDIBLE] I saw him. But there – you fought the elements, out here. It's hard for people to believe that you fight the elements. [INAUDIBLE] like going over to Saudi in that deal, there – fought the elements. Anywhere you go –

INTERVIEWER: So there's really two wars going out here.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: Two wars – a physical one plus an element one.

INTERVIEWER: Right – environmental one.

MARVIN DELGADO: Environmental, yeah, and it's bad because a lot of people, here, they walk barefoot [INAUDIBLE] lepers out here, in these islands, and see them deteriorate. Yet, we don't caught that because it's not a communicable disease, in our way of thinking. They were giving shots to counteract it. I've got as high as 14 shots out of these islands going to different – in Vietnam [INAUDIBLE] lined up and they'd shoot you. [INAUDIBLE] was a good shot, but everybody told horror stories of getting shot in the rump with it. It's never – you just got up and get the shot. Some of you had reactions and they'd go, "It's normal." Some kids react differently. But you got to have these shots. You ain't getting around them. [INAUDIBLE] put a needle in me. That gun hurts me mentally and [INAUDIBLE] and it's nice because you go quick down the line, though.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you didn't come out this time with getting any shots, did you?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, I checked on that – whether I needed a passport or a shot card. They said, "No, you don't need either one." But I – mine are kept up in case I do go somewhere because I always get the boosters. Tetanus was – always get that. But I still get – even though I'm retired, I still –

INTERVIEWER: What was it like, your first combat experience? Were you frightened?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, no. We had a good spirit. Well, we call it spirit, now. In those days, I don't know what it was. The reaction was there. The motivation was there. We were attacked. We all had – we weren't propagandized or nothing. We all went because everybody went. It was a good war. We were attacked and we were gonna fight an enemy that attacked us. That's all there was cold cut and dried.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: But you know, Marvin, I went out in this jungle. We went out looking for stuff. I tried to imagine what it was like for guys like you. To me, that place is scary out there.

MARVIN DELGADO: It does, when you look at it. But we never thought of those things.

INTERVIEWER: Was it because you were with your buddies?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, it was just the idea that we're all together and we're all fighting in unison. We're all given a mission, or told – we got leaders. Everybody was good – they were all good troopers. You might call it dedicatedness, now. We didn't even have that word in those days. We all went to war to fight the Japanese that attacked us. Nobody had to tell us horrible – how they [INAUDIBLE] or how they butchered our people as prisoners. Nobody had to tell us nothing like that. We did see it – bodies that were mangled like that. [INAUDIBLE] why people doing that to one another? We're killing each other, and yet here, we come across [INAUDIBLE] trooper they had caught out on patrol and was mutilated. Before they killed him, they chopped him in half, or a lot of times they'd gouge his eyes out. That's dumb. To this day – Orientals do this. Even the Saudi people, on the other side, they do this [INAUDIBLE] I never [INAUDIBLE] why [INAUDIBLE] mangled body to kill him [INAUDIBLE] or mangle your own people. [INAUDIBLE] busload of people that they just blow up – little bus, there, in Vietnam – they'd mangle them up. But going back here, we never understood that part of it. We never understood about – naturally, we were a [INAUDIBLE] at night because here, at Guadalcanal [INAUDIBLE] Charlie'd come over, harassing them. All he was doing to harass us and every gunner would open up on him – never hit the guy – he'd go back to [PH] Rabul. Yet the shot would come down and pepper us and we'd [INAUDIBLE] shrapnel from the birds. Also, the submarine come in. Now, that was a little scary. He'd come rise up out there in the

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

[INAUDIBLE]. He'd shell us in the groves there. Shrapnel would zing all over. You can get cut in half by the shrapnel – just harassing. He wasn't shooting at – he didn't know whether anybody was in that grove. They shoot at random, harassing. But it was real and it was weird-like or leery, you might call it. We weren't actually scared, like the word scared is supposed to be. We were just alerted. We knew we was out – we didn't have time to even think about – we never thought about getting killed, getting wounded – never seen what they called loved ones. We never thought in those terms, in those days. We weren't exactly [INAUDIBLE] toward humanity, but we didn't think – nowadays, can't wait to get home. My time is [INAUDIBLE] I might get hurt, here. I deploy – I don't want to go over [INAUDIBLE]. We all went and we fought a war. A lot were killed out here.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't it hard, Marvin, when some of your – these guys that you showed me in this picture got killed?

MARVIN DELGADO: If you got too close to them. I had to teach my – when I become a leader – in other words, a fire team leader – I saw a couple Johnny when [PH] Burt got killed down here in the jungles of the canal. We went across an open and Burt got killed, so naturally, we took cover. Johnny, his boyhood friend from back [INAUDIBLE] cried, and we held him. He said, "I want to go out and get him." I said, "Johnny, you step out there, you're dead, period." He's dying. He's already dead. He was so dead there was already maggots, already, out of the [INAUDIBLE] the humidity caused your body [INAUDIBLE]. You could see bones. He was killed [INAUDIBLE] he would begin to – because skeletonize from the humidity. Johnny wanted to go out there. I thought to myself, "Boy." We all saw it. We steeled and hardened ourselves. Another aspect of war – don't get too close to people because it has that effect. Of course, they were boyhood friends [INAUDIBLE] hard on him. Later in life [INAUDIBLE] where a person got too close to another person from

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

another part of the country because you got to know each other real personal – knew your mother [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Go out on liberty together and stuff like that.

MARVIN DELGADO: But then, we had no liberty, we went right directly to war. So you met them right there, real close. We didn't have the [INAUDIBLE] of being – toward each other, but just as fighters or warriors, we got to know each other good. So it was hard, sometimes, to see one of them killed. [PH] Burkhard – his dad was one of the designers of the Constellation – the Glendale – he was like a father to us. He was every bit of about 20, but he was [INAUDIBLE] older than us. He took care of us good. He was, I think, our platoon sergeant.

INTERVIEWER: When you say somebody takes care of you good, for a non-military person that's listening to this, what do you mean?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, health-wise, and that you don't get [INAUDIBLE] being sullen or getting a little leery, a little shaky of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Keeps morale up.

MARVIN DELGADO: Morale-like – looks at you like a son. Then, you're fighting, doing your job, going up – be sure you're moving out right and left and everything else. Then, when you get in a fire fight, that you come through all right – that you learn how to fight the enemy by not just getting up and charging. People that do that are way past the stage of being – thinking with common sense.

[OVERLAPPING]

INTERVIEWER: The John Wayne impression of –

MARVIN DELGADO: Right. You don't have that – the Marine Corps' taught – oh, you'll do it in times. You'll charge at times, but you don't do it foolishly. You don't think about I'll give you a big medal going out there. No, no. Sometimes you react. Your reaction's what [INAUDIBLE] you're at the right place at the right time to be

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

recognized. They've asked me, "Where's your medals you're supposed to get for saving all these [INAUDIBLE] that tank attack [INAUDIBLE]. I said, "What medal?" They all [INAUDIBLE]. We all done it. They give one to each one of them. Right now, air medals they got for missions. They don't give one for us. Every time we go to [INAUDIBLE] give you nothing. You just come out alive.

INTERVIEWER: Doing your job, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, doing the job. But they're medal crazy, people are, in all services. [INAUDIBLE] it goes on. I only had five ribbons when I come back to the States. It was a great thing.

INTERVIEWER: You got a Purple Heart, didn't you?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, the Purple Heart [INAUDIBLE] I said I'd rattle off and [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: No, that's fine. Let's move forward to – you had this experience at [PH] Tarawa. Tarawa was [INAUDIBLE] the Marine Corps had ever seen before. Tell me a little bit about your experience at Tarawa.

MARVIN DELGADO: Mine? Just my [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Just your experience.

MARVIN DELGADO: We were aboard the Harris. We were a command ship, so we got to move in closer to the reef. The waves actually [INAUDIBLE] circling waves and going in. Well, we would see them. We were in reserve waves. We would see all that firing stuff on the land. Then, pretty soon, we would see a lot of debris on the shoreline, not knowing those are bodies being held like buoys from their packs – all dead because we waded through them when we come in. Anyhow, it was a desperate thing. It was supposed to be that way. They were supposed to be bombarded a month ahead of time – or two months – by ships and planes. Everybody died of concussion in the bunkers or on the [INAUDIBLE] blew up.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

Nothing happened like that. They were waiting when the waves started going in and they got cut down bad. We were ordered in the evening of the first night. We didn't get in there, actually, 'til the second day.

INTERVIEWER: What happened?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, we were in the reserve – in fact, actually, when our waves went in – the reserves [INAUDIBLE] from the command ship – all of the other ships already sent their waves in. They got – General [INAUDIBLE] the general alerted – the landing force made up of sailors on the ships. They're all set that way. If something really happens bad, they send sailors [INAUDIBLE] landing force. They have a name for it. They have an organization aboard ship – all going. He already was thinking about them after we went in. Well, we got in all right and was able to [INAUDIBLE] the landing party, they called it, I think [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: So you mean the fight was so desperate, they was gonna commit even those guys?

MARVIN DELGADO: Even sailors, yeah – even sailors. Of course [INAUDIBLE] enough with our drivers coming in. That was something else, these [INAUDIBLE]. They were two to a vehicle and the driver – they had to pull pins out, the ramp, and then the driver. He drove like this, laying down because the fire coming at you would cut them down – not our waves was, but the first – a lot sailors are killed manning those craft coming in. Plus the [PH] am-tracs – the alligators, we call them – that you see [INAUDIBLE] shore, there. But anyhow, our boat had started in [INAUDIBLE] they had [INAUDIBLE] has stuff with oranges and apples, cheese sandwich, sandwich. So we got [INAUDIBLE] round and round and round. All through the night, go in circles. The waves are already in – some had got in. Anyhow, we would – our boat was plywood three sides, steel front part. So he'd go forward steel, bullets would hit there, he'd back off in our fumes. First thing you know, we're heaving – puking all

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

over ourselves, standing there. Now, we're going to do combat in there, whenever we land, and we're sick.

INTERVIEWER: So the fumes – the boat's rocking, the fumes are coming in the boat, and you guys all get sick.

MARVIN DELGADO: We're not turning around – we're turning around in the rendezvous, but not going toward the enemy. He goes straight in, but then we can't get in because the fire's too heavy, so he backs out a little bit. [INAUDIBLE] scraping the bottom of that boat. But going back to these fumes, they'd come in from the motor behind us. We're all heaving. So these two sailors come down with buckets of salt water, wash us off like you're washing off a dirty spot on the floor.

INTERVIEWER: Was everybody getting sick?

MARVIN DELGADO: Everybody was sick.

INTERVIEWER: How many guys were in the boat?

MARVIN DELGADO: There were, maybe – let's see – I'd say 20 guys, 24, somewhere in that area.

INTERVIEWER: And that was the first time you were every seasick, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: I was sick from those fumes. It was seasick, yeah. Because I didn't get seasick, even, crossing the straits of – in New Zealand. We went there and [INAUDIBLE] going out of there, coming up the New Hebrides [INAUDIBLE] Guadalcanal. A lot of guys did. A lot of guys are rocking [INAUDIBLE] the Atlantic, and I never did. But that time, there, we all got sick.

INTERVIEWER: So you landed at Tarawa, finally.

MARVIN DELGADO: Our boat scraped [INAUDIBLE] so we had to wade in. We took the little guys and [INAUDIBLE] [PH] Chesney, [PH] Ronkoski and little – another little kid. We'd hold them up – me and [PH] Jovando [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Because it was too deep for them?

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: Too deep – and then, by the time we [INAUDIBLE] we'd start in and we'd crouch down going in. Well, we didn't get too much far on our front because Colonel [PH] Crozaft had come in – and he's a legend in the Marine Corps – him and [INAUDIBLE] – come in and [INAUDIBLE] in front, so we took a lot of the slack [INAUDIBLE]. They'd chase us back in our holes or whatever. They went in that little bit. Of course, you could see clear to the end of the island, just eyesight because it was long and narrow. That saved a lot of [INAUDIBLE]. Of course, you've got the sea wall, and then everybody bunched up and then we jumped over that and ran [INAUDIBLE]. Then, the first one I killed, so help me, I'd rather die in my tracks.

INTERVIEWER: How's that?

MARVIN DELGADO: In the movie "Battle Cry," there's a scene where John Wayne goes up with a saddle charge –

INTERVIEWER: Oh, "Sands of Iwo Jima."

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, and it's black-and-white footage. That was our unit taking that bunker. Well, in the movie, it shows John Wayne running up there, throwing charge and falling down.

INTERVIEWER: So they used combat footage?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, in the film. Well, that bunker there, they have [INAUDIBLE]. I don't know how many Japanese were in there – had to run back in there [INAUDIBLE]. So we sent flame throwers up the side. They run out the entrances. They had – like any bunker – one or two alternate entrances. They come out the front. I got behind a broke-off palm tree. Right behind it, Jovando's standing over there. Here comes this big Japanese guy come in. I never saw a big Japanese guy in my life. He's running at me high port. I'm shooting at him and I see bullets going through him and the guy keeps coming. I don't know whether to die, go blind,

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

obliterate. Johnny's standing there – sitting down there laughing at me. I'm quivering like hell, shooting that guy, and he's coming at me.

INTERVIEWER: How many rounds did you hit him with?

MARVIN DELGADO: I must have hit him with ten. I had a [PH] BR [INAUDIBLE] but I had the BR, firing him. I see [INAUDIBLE] going through him. Johnny's laying there laughing at me. The guy finally falls in front of – his hand was no further than from here to that bag from me – that table – big hands. I said, "Johnny, what the hell was that." He said, "Marv, that guy was dead when you hit him, coming out there, but his momentum – he's so fierce." [INAUDIBLE] these are Imperial Marines we're fighting, here. They were actually special [INAUDIBLE] naval force – Navy.

INTERVIEWER: They're your counterparts.

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, counterparts. But they're called sailors; we're called Marines. Now, that's [INAUDIBLE] sailors on our ships – special landing party, that's what they call them, there. I happened to think of it. But anyhow, he was dead. But they were so good. We kept going around shooting, hopping down [INAUDIBLE] and whatnot [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: That had to be terrifying.

MARVIN DELGADO: And then, we saw little guys [INAUDIBLE] dead [INAUDIBLE]. So he says, "Hey, who are these guys?" [INAUDIBLE] I don't remember them ever firing at us, but they were there with and they got killed with them. These Imperial Marines – these Marines – Imperial Marines, I call them for the interview – all they done was fight – any menial work, they done – these Korean – they could be Korean laborers, they could be Chinese laborers, prisoners of some other nation [INAUDIBLE] or anything else.

INTERVIEWER: They were building the fortifications.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] these Imperial would not stoop that low. They were strictly fierce fighters. They trained one another and so on. That's why they come at you, period, and died to the man, right on the spot. I used to think, "Boy, they must make a glorious looking soldier, in their uniform, big over the average Japanese [INAUDIBLE], walking around. Because they were arrogant-type people, like the Samurais. They're [INAUDIBLE] but they're really power. I have visualized that guy – these guys come out of Manchuria, where you ate corn, milk and all that steak and stuff, where the Japanese fish and rice in their island. They got developed big. Those days you'd see them – Sumos come out of their lot. But killing that guy [INAUDIBLE] look at that guy.

INTERVIEWER: Was that really the first guy you killed that you were really face-to-face?

MARVIN DELGADO: Imperial Marine, yeah, at Tarawa. Then, at random, we shot at the other – we were running from bunker to bunker killing them.

INTERVIEWER: How long were you fighting on that island for – the next couple of days?

MARVIN DELGADO: We fought – well, 72 or 79 hours. We fought that – our outfit fought maybe one full day, one full night of that time because there are other outfits in there already – 8th Marines, 2nd Marines and the [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: It must have been appalling to see all of those dead on the beach.

MARVIN DELGADO: I'll tell you what was really bad. We're done fighting – first of all, we drove to the little – they got a little tip, there, at Tarawa, there. There were guys going on am-tracs [INAUDIBLE] because the Japanese were trying to get away from the island [INAUDIBLE] to the little – I'll think of the name of it – a little piece of island – they connected. At high tide you could walk – low tide [INAUDIBLE] separate island. Everyone shooting like bubbles guys trying to swim over there. Then, we

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

come back – because they'd pretty well flushed them out. The Marines had already done [INAUDIBLE] I think they called it – the little island there and it attached to – then, we had to go on the shore and there all the dead were laying there all – they looked [INAUDIBLE] bloated –

INTERVIEWER: From being out in the sun – exposure?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, and you try to take him by the limbs – no way. Their limbs would come off and all that pus would come out and everything and you stunk like hell. So we'd roll them. We'd do the same thing up there at [PH] Mari Point – [INAUDIBLE] down there that jumped off the cliff over there. Same thing, but down there they were all [INAUDIBLE]. They had barrel details we call grave [INAUDIBLE] people. I can't talk [INAUDIBLE] because I got new teeth.

INTERVIEWER: That's okay.

MARVIN DELGADO: They would go down and do the paperwork on these bodies, but we'd come bring them into – off the water. You saw them floating on the movies, and they're floating in – bring them up because we're ready to go back aboard ship – go back aboard ships [INAUDIBLE]. You could be in fierce combat, the next minute, you're [INAUDIBLE] a working party.

INTERVIEWER: Burying detail.

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] that's the way it was in the Marine Corps. You done that. But anyhow, we got these bodies on, then they start claiming them and everything else. They got us back aboard ship – went up that rope again. After going through all that physical thing down there, on land – the horror of it – got back and we're beat. In fact, I don't remember eating a meal at Tarawa – eating. I don't.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

MARVIN DELGADO: I don't remember sitting – we didn't carry [INAUDIBLE] ration with us because whatever we had we might have ate already. But I don't remember

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

sitting there and opening the can and eating the meal, so busy fighting. We must have had something in us. We must have got some kind of – from a can or a biscuit or something – or a bar. I did eat – I remember eating [INAUDIBLE] I loved pound cake in a can or the little chocolate bars. A lot of them hated that chocolate bar. But I think that's what [INAUDIBLE] probably ate. Anyhow, getting up, going back up on the ship, we got up the rope and we flung ourself on the deck – sailors all agog, looking at us, because they all know the horror because the other people come in. Sat down with a couple of the guys – don't know who they were – and then it hit us – the war. We started shaking, nervous. [INAUDIBLE] It didn't hit me until I got back aboard ship, safe, and I started shaking like hell. Not only that, several of the guys did. It was the after effect. They got [INAUDIBLE] and know what it is, nowadays. We didn't know. All we know is, "Hey, we're out of it. We're safe and now we're shaking." It struck me as real odd and [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Well, many of the veterans I've talked to, Marv, say the same thing. I've only had one experience that – I was fighting fires in Yellowstone, and we had a near thing where we got chased into a safety zone. The fire burned around us. When it was all over and we got down the hill, I started shaking like a leaf.

MARVIN DELGADO: That's right. It happened to me. Now, that was sort of [INAUDIBLE] because after that, I don't say the wars – I participated in all of them, except for Okinawa – out here, and then I went Korean, Vietnam and to Lebanon and the Cuban thing. But you adapt yourself to it. You're no hero or nothing, you just live [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: I don't know about that.

MARVIN DELGADO: You know what to do, how to do it, and how you have your people do it to keep them from being foolishly killed. They'll get killed or wounded –

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

something you can't help with so much fire come at – but to take care of yourself, within reasons. One time here, on Saipan, right here, going up [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we do that? Let's move to Saipan because we've got to end our interview here in a little while. On D-Day, where did you land?

MARVIN DELGADO: We were [INAUDIBLE] the first wave. We were the ones [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: So you're first wave, right?

MARVIN DELGADO: First wave, right here [INAUDIBLE] down here. They tell me it's right there [INAUDIBLE]. I'm just saying this because they tell me it's there.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of people are still looking for the beaches. Are you doing that?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, no. They told me – went in there and saw maps and it corresponds [INAUDIBLE] that was your area. I look at it and I can't really – I went down and took pictures. I'll take more. But it was all [INAUDIBLE] trees. But we got up in there on an am-trac and now, they're firing at us, but not [INAUDIBLE] Tarawa. We don't have that volume of fire coming down. We get in and the whole thing is rocking up and down. We look up and there's Japanese in trees – soldiers shooting right down at us. They're just shooting. [INAUDIBLE] I don't remember him hitting – he might have hit some guys [INAUDIBLE]. So we put up our [INAUDIBLE] and shoot him. He drops out of the tree. The other guys are doing – and we think, "How dumb is it to put people up there like that, shooting at us [INAUDIBLE] but now they're dead." But that's the way they fought. We didn't know this was the homeland because we got in, and I hear later the fire from above us – or forward of us – shot a lot of people coming in. There were more of us [INAUDIBLE] I read that yesterday. It says "6th Marines incurred heavy losses." We got in all right on that trip. But I guess the waves walking in [INAUDIBLE] caught a lot of it because they had to fire over us. We was right in the grove or the jungle [INAUDIBLE]

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: In fact, in many cases, the second and third waves took terrible casualties.

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, that's a good example, right there. Because I wasn't aware of it 'til I read that plaque yesterday. I know people were wounded a lot and everything else. Anyhow, we got in. We got into a tank trap. It was a mess. Anyhow, we're there. We kinda fought that far.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what was it like? What's a tank trap like?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, it was there to keep [INAUDIBLE] when it come in.
[INAUDIBLE]

[OVERLAPPING]

MARVIN DELGADO: It was just a miniature canal – a crude canal. It was in that area that we caught the [PH] Benzai attack.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about that, and when did that take place?

MARVIN DELGADO: That took place – I could be wrong – one day or two days – I think it's the first day. I'm pretty sure it was the first day. We got forward – because it was only a couple hundred yards in, so it had to be the first day. We held up there because here you are landing, and you control [INAUDIBLE] control by the war is you control each other. We went up so far. In front of us was a slope – a [INAUDIBLE] slope. We saw movement up there. There's [INAUDIBLE] in front of us, a little bit of it [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Just sporadic fire?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah [INAUDIBLE] heavy or light [INAUDIBLE] but that's the way the war was. We held up and I remember we were in rocks in that area.

INTERVIEWER: Coral rocks?

MARVIN DELGADO: The coral rocks that they had out there. We saw movement up in the trees, maybe a good thousand yards away from us. Then [INAUDIBLE] we're

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

gonna catch a Benzai attack tonight. Then, we kept just seeing all kinds – kept seeing people in civilian clothing – just civilian-type clothes. I said to myself, “What is all that?” They were [INAUDIBLE]. You could see more and more moving in that little tree line there [INAUDIBLE]. Well, this was a Japanese homeland, come to find out. They had settled here. They had farms, two towns here.

INTERVIEWER: Mandated [INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: Anyhow, the Benzai come in just before it turned dark. It was still, maybe, a little light.

INTERVIEWER: Just at dusk?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. There’s one the comical part started and the horror part starts. In front of each group coming down there [INAUDIBLE] the Benzai [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: How many, do you think?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, hell. It had to be several thousand, easy. It was hundreds. [INAUDIBLE] because I’m just a little old dumb trooper looking in front and there they come [INAUDIBLE]. We stacked up several hundred in front of us. Nobody kind of – it was war – pile up bodies, pile up bodies again, whether it’s 20 or 30 or 60 or 100, we don’t know – or I didn’t [INAUDIBLE] just go through. Anyhow, coming down there and the charge started, the ships had lit the place up out there.

INTERVIEWER: They were firing at them?

MARVIN DELGADO: They were firing at them, and flares.

INTERVIEWER: Star shells and flares?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah. I don’t remember them firing too much at them, but they were firing – the ships were. We had no artillery set up to support us [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Any tanks for you?

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: No tanks were with us, no; not yet. They were gonna come. We didn't see tanks, at all, until we saw Japanese tanks the next day. Anyhow, getting back to the Benzai. One officer [INAUDIBLE] short, bandy-legged, running in front of his people. He was, maybe, I'd say, 20-30 foot in front of his people, leading his people in the Benzai. [INAUDIBLE] to begin with, in the Benzai, hit him so you know you're gonna drop them. Don't hit at random. [INAUDIBLE]. But this little guy – we could see up the line, every so many, guys with swords [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Officers out front.

MARVIN DELGADO: They were really gung-ho little bastards. There they are, sighted on him, hit him [INAUDIBLE] chicken – feathers – just disintegrated [INAUDIBLE] because you got time to hit the others. By the time – people were flying up in there and they're cutting them down. They kept charging us all night long – all night long.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was there a lot of hollering going on with these people?

MARVIN DELGADO: For them people, all kinds of hollering, yeah. But we give no thought to it – too busy – a lot of firing and stuff going on.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't that nerve wracking with all the gunfire and people yelling?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, our mind was geared that that don't affect us. I don't know. [INAUDIBLE] like at the canal they'd say, "Tonight you die, Marine."

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they'd be talking to you like that?

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, yeah, they'd holler at you. They'd holler [INAUDIBLE]. "Tonight you die, Marine." We'd let them keep going. Or someone'd say, "Hey, I'm hurt. Come out and get me." The Japanese [INAUDIBLE] and the guys got sucked in. A lot of the guys got killed that way. [INAUDIBLE] back in the homeland. They done a lot in the Pacific war. A lot of the guys were sucked into that. We learned fast. They fight like that out here.

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

INTERVIEWER: Would you guys yell back things to the Japanese?

[INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Go on for?

MARVIN DELGADO: All night – all night they kept coming – so damn many of them. Like I say, I don't know how many come in there. I've never read up.

INTERVIEWER: Did it get to hand-to-hand combat?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, not – some of the sectors did. Some sectors did.

INTERVIEWER: But you guys didn't?

MARVIN DELGADO: I know our sector, even the alive were crawling over the dead trying to still charge us. They were that fanatically defending themselves. In fact, we have an [INAUDIBLE] firing at us, go back in the house. The guys refused to fire at her. Hey, wait a minute, shoot her. She's got a gun and she's shooting us. Want her to kill us all right here? [INAUDIBLE] dropped her.

INTERVIEWER: So there was a woman that was shooting at you?

MARVIN DELGADO: Her dad's sitting on the porch – old granddad sitting there on the porch – just sitting there [INAUDIBLE] her run into the house, get some more rounds [INAUDIBLE] at us. I don't know where it was at. I don't know [INAUDIBLE] as it is.

INTERVIEWER: Is that story fairly known?

MARVIN DELGADO: I don't know. There were men and women that fought us out here. I guess they had cases where you had to shoot [INAUDIBLE]. Here's one thing, too [INAUDIBLE] I never heard of no atrocities, no raping, no nothing. The only time we saw women was in this island. We didn't see them in Guadalcanal. We didn't see them in Tarawa. But there are stories, like in Vietnam, rapes and [INAUDIBLE] Americans did. But we had no –

INTERVIEWER: There was nothing like that.

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: No, we didn't – our morals were different [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: When the morning came and you saw all these hundreds of bodies, you guys must have said, "This is incredible."

MARVIN DELGADO: No, nothing like that.

INTERVIEWER: But this charge going all night –

MARVIN DELGADO: No. [INAUDIBLE] they were all dead, period, in our front. But we had to do – we had to go through the bodies [INAUDIBLE] and then, if you went through them, and say you went by and you hit a leg and it like this, he's faking dead. Shoot him again in the heart and the head. Or you pick a – touch this arm, it would done like this. Hey, that guy's still – he's faking [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: What would an arm of a dead person be like?

MARVIN DELGADO: A dead person, it would move freely. [INAUDIBLE] it wasn't stiff or you couldn't lift it – rigor mortis. So you learn that trick on these attacks because they done – they went in among their own dead, and when you went past them, they'd sit up and shoot you. It was common – common war. But you learn that. So we went through – walked through –

INTERVIEWER: That's the difference between an experienced veteran.

MARVIN DELGADO: That's right and a young kid. A lot of young kids get killed foolish out there – a lot of them. We tried, as leaders [INAUDIBLE] teach our young kids the aspects right quick-like – like they got back at Camp Pendleton – Camp Elliot – come in from the war and told us tricks they were doing. He told us about these tricks – about among their dead – look out – and their hollering at you, in English, "Hey, Joe, come here. Hey, Dave, come here," or something like that, "I need some help, here." That could be a trap.

INTERVIEWER: Well, why don't you take us to the next spot – the tank battle.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: The tank battle. After the Benzai, we started – we went up little knolls, here. It was in the evening. We hear clanking and rattling, and they were in front of us. They weren't behind us. It was these – there was Japanese – they had crude old tanks. You can see that one right there. They come around among us, so we all started jumping [INAUDIBLE] the hatches. This guy, Hodges, stayed up there. He'd hop from tank to tank, throwing grenades down there. I just talked to him, here, a few months ago. I says, "Hodge, you should have got the Navy Cross." They put me up for it [INAUDIBLE] I don't know what they put me up for. I've never seen it. You forget about medals. Even the guys [INAUDIBLE] "Hey, Marv, you got to try and get your medals." No, no, it's already gone. [INAUDIBLE] the medal I got in Hawaii [INAUDIBLE] says, "What kind of medal did you get?" I ain't saw no medal. It's just one of [INAUDIBLE]. But anyhow, that tank battle, all night –

INTERVIEWER: How many Japanese tanks were coming at you?

MARVIN DELGADO: I don't know. There must have been – I would say, easily – just a base figure because I didn't count – there were over six, I know. There could have been eight or ten. There might have been [INAUDIBLE] four. But I think it was six, seven, eight because they – in the daylight, we'd already survived – it was the first time infantry has ever beat tanks. In fact, I heard a story that at Quantico, where they train our officers, taught them – they use tactics. There was no tactics there. It was every man for himself, and it amounted to survival that day on that knoll. But they taught – I hear; I don't know for sure. I never saw the instruction book, but they claim that's covered. Some officers have told me. Somebody says in their class about you guys had a tank battle here on Saipan. There was no tactical, there. Everybody – even officers and staff and all were –

INTERVIEWER: So what'd you guys do when these tanks started coming at you? What'd you decide to do?

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] I don't remember them having a machine gun attached, like they do now, and you spray everything you shoot.

[INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] Well, in fact, our top, McDonald, was killed right there by one of the guns of the tank – wrong precise spot at the wrong time and died right there. But other guys got up there, too [INAUDIBLE] we'd roll over [INAUDIBLE] I remember shooting a rifle at the tank, just in the dead – it was night.

INTERVIEWER: So how did you knock these tanks out?

MARVIN DELGADO: Jump on them, threw a grenade down the turret.

INTERVIEWER: Didn't they have those hatches battened down?

MARVIN DELGADO: Sometimes they were open [INAUDIBLE] we'd get up on top and look. They didn't have the armament or the fire power these new tanks – you batten down the hatches. They were all crude things, as I remember. I didn't study the tank real good, but I remember you could hit the hatch and throw a grenade down there. We done that and little Hodge was doing a good job. I remember that. We were down on the ground. We were throwing grenades up to him [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: He was riding on top of the tank?

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah – jump on top – never thought about getting burned on that – the back is really hot – never thought of – or the tracking that chews you up. We never thought of that. Reaction, reaction, reaction.

INTERVIEWER: And you guys were tossing grenades up to him to throw?

MARVIN DELGADO: From the guy that was standing – we saw a guy on the tank, we'd throw more grenades at him, be sure he threw them down –

INTERVIEWER: They didn't have any infantry support?

MARVIN DELGADO: No. Now, I hear [INAUDIBLE] probably other outfits, that were on the other side of the tank, cut down the infantry because I don't remember

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

fighting the infantry on that, no, that day. There were dead Japanese up in there – in that area. I think the people there were our flanks, or alongside of us – because there were more than one company. Other companies were in there too, I think. But they claim there were infantry. I [INAUDIBLE] didn't see any. We were just shooting at the tanks. I don't remember shooting at the Japanese. We'd be shooting our own because it was all scattered in there, period.

INTERVIEWER: How many tanks did Hodge knock out?

MARVIN DELGADO: I don't know, but I know that one, two – I know two [INAUDIBLE] threw a grenade through them because he hopped over another one. Little short guy – he's in the book, there. His picture's right there. I talked to him the other day. I said [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Is he here?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, he's not here. He's in Alabama. He couldn't – these are expensive things to go to. He can't afford it. A lot of them are old. A lot of cripples – I don't know how they're gonna march the parade out here. We're gonna sit in the grandstand. I can walk the route [INAUDIBLE]. But this guy – some of these men down here in crutches and wheelchairs, there's no way they can go down to the parade [INAUDIBLE]. Getting back to that, we got that and then we're – from what I can recall, veered over to [PH] Cherakanoa. They had a little strip there and they had a hospital, there, by a radio station. I later come back as a casualty to there.

INTERVIEWER: That's where you got wounded, over there.

MARVIN DELGADO: When I got wounded on the hill, they brought me – I was told I got to get evacuated. Then, they – tried to [INAUDIBLE] my leg and they kept me off and they put me in a stretcher and brought me down to that little field hospital, out here, at Cherakanoa. Some of the people took out of this valley was this man, Mr. Perez, came down and saw me off. I was hoping I could find this guy. He's here.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

He's probably an old man. I thought that he give me the name of Jesus Perez. That's what I wrote him, here, before I got here. He was still alive. Some of the [INAUDIBLE] that came out of that valley, down there, that are on the second page of the book of Saipan, they're there – the women – the old women – the kids. There's a lot of kids in there and old people.

INTERVIEWER: Let's see this picture. Maybe I can put this picture up, right about there, and maybe someone will see that and you want to meet with him?

MARVIN DELGADO: I'd like to talk to him and say hi and whatnot to him.

INTERVIEWER: We could go on for hours talking about these stories. You were a veteran that saw service. Did you see service in Korea, as well?

MARVIN DELGADO: In Korea and then –

INTERVIEWER: Vietnam?

MARVIN DELGADO: – in Vietnam. In fact, me and my son were the – one of the few father/son teams over there. I went in there to get him out of the country because I come out of the DMZ as a first sergeant and that. I feel [INAUDIBLE] safer. Basically, you weren't because [INAUDIBLE]. But there, it just happens that you have a better chance of staying alive [INAUDIBLE] first sergeant.

INTERVIEWER: But you've had all of this experience and you've come back. Why did you come back to Saipan?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, actually because I got too heavily involved here, a lot of – I don't say bad memories or good memories, just I had an experience here and I'm living. I'm able bodied. I can walk. I'm not dead.

INTERVIEWER: How old are you, now?

MARVIN DELGADO: I'm 72 [INAUDIBLE]. I go out here and walk the whole length of this whole boulevard. I wanted to walk back from Camp Elliot to Camp Pendleton [INAUDIBLE] the march they just made a few months ago. I told them, there, if I was

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

here with a bunch, I'd walk. It wouldn't be right. You guys [INAUDIBLE] walked outside of the compound and got in a truck and rode all the way back to Camp Pendleton.

INTERVIEWER: So it's important for you to come back to Saipan?

MARVIN DELGADO: I was real interested [INAUDIBLE].

INTERVIEWER: One of the reasons you came back is you wanted to meet this guy?

MARVIN DELGADO: See if he's still living, or somebody that was in that valley that come out that night because we put him in our foxhole and then we shelled them – that valley where they were waiting to jump out. What they did, they put these people as bait, in this valley. That's why he's looking for us, to tell us a trap was set for us. I say, I almost killed the guy. I thought he was Japanese, and then I talked Spanish to him – I talked to him in Japanese – phrases. I didn't know any Japanese. [INAUDIBLE] they tell me it means come over here. Come here.

INTERVIEWER: Come on out, yeah.

MARVIN DELGADO: Then, when finally said, "Wait a minute." Somebody said, "Hey [INAUDIBLE] speak Spanish." I says [INAUDIBLE]. The guy looked up at me and he run out from the little house – little shack. It was a cornfield or a [INAUDIBLE] or something like that. Then, he got in the lines – I told him, "Hey, bring the [INAUDIBLE]." They're all waiting for him – all of the big wheels – the intelligence people and all that. Of course, we're all skuzzy looking from being here.

INTERVIEWER: Was the lieutenant –

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] I'll think of his name pretty soon [INAUDIBLE] because our CO [INAUDIBLE] our current CO got killed our wounded. [PH] Rench was the guy's name. They were all interrogating [INAUDIBLE] and then, I guess, I was talking to him out here and somebody took a picture. There's other pictures [INAUDIBLE] *Life* Magazine back in '44. Anyhow, he says [INAUDIBLE]. I said, "What

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

are you talking about?” He says, “You’re going down and bring up the surveillance down there [INAUDIBLE]. I said, “Wait a minute. They’ll shoot me.” He says, “No.” He says, “The Japanese security goes back to their valley, on the other side, at dusk.” So there goes my helmet [INAUDIBLE] dungarees – he took off. We’re all standing there in a bunch [INAUDIBLE] our lines. They took off my – they cut my trousers off to here, left my boots on – mangled old shoes – and give me a knife. He says, “Bring out no rattly stuff, no weapons, no – just what they could carry themselves.” I went down there [INAUDIBLE] and I told, “Hey, get over here and listen. You’re all getting out of here as fast as you can. I’m gonna take you back in our lines.” So we had them living in foxholes [INAUDIBLE] there. Then, they fired into their valley. Now, by that time [INAUDIBLE] and we had ships. They rained stuff in that valley. I don’t remember [INAUDIBLE] to go through the valley and search and sweep through that. They were all – a lot of them were killed in their valley because the war’s really moving fast, then. But that’s what saved them [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: So you went in and brought these people out?

MARVIN DELGADO: Trail them out or led them out, like a guide.

INTERVIEWER: How many people were there?

MARVIN DELGADO: I’d say, basically, between two and three hundred. I don’t know [INAUDIBLE] they never said. But they had used them as bait [INAUDIBLE] use them as sacrifices. They had no qualms about doing those things. On this war –

INTERVIEWER: So tomorrow’s gonna be a big day for you, isn’t it?

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, they tell me the parade and the –

INTERVIEWER: It’s the anniversary of the landing.

MARVIN DELGADO: The landing, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Are you glad you came back?

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: Oh, yeah. Definitely, yeah. And then, the hospitality I've received, here – Herman taking me into his home – [PH] Palacito, is that his name?

INTERVIEWER: [PH] Palacios, I believe.

MARVIN DELGADO: Palacios, yeah – into his home, his family, his wife, Joyce.

INTERVIEWER: Does it seem like it was 50 years ago?

MARVIN DELGADO: No, it don't. Time goes fast. But yet, I look around, and it has been a long time ago because a lot of my people – a lot of the guys I knew are dead, just from normal causes – some disease, some [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: I saw you meeting a lot of people last night at the reception.

MARVIN DELGADO: Well, they were talking to me, wearing that uniform and then looking the way I was. I said I'm gonna wear that, here. I thought it'd be a formal function. I said, "I'll wear it here." Then I met the guy, again – just the second night I saw Sheck, he was there. Now, he's disappeared again. I don't know where he's at. Then [INAUDIBLE] I never saw the guy that we – the guy hit in that little draw, there, and bled a lot. They shot at us, trying to find us down in the dark, down there. He's here, somewhere. He's staying down in the last hotel south, there.

INTERVIEWER: The Pacific Beach Club?

MARVIN DELGADO: Pacific Beach Club, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well [INAUDIBLE]

MARVIN DELGADO: It's hot, though, here, but I expected that.

INTERVIEWER: It doesn't seem like 50 years ago, but it doesn't seem like we've been talking for over an hour.

MARVIN DELGADO: Have we?

INTERVIEWER: We have and we have to bring this interview to an end. But I really want to thank you, Marvin. You have some wonderful stories to tell.

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: [INAUDIBLE] my mind is so good and physically, I'm still – I got a couple of physicals. I'm going back for another [INAUDIBLE] back for another good physical because colon cancer's hitting a lot of old people. I got a clear [INAUDIBLE] VA, at their hospital. Now my [INAUDIBLE] doctor, which is the old program, wants to give me a good check all the way up in there, put all kinds of stuff in, because he can't understand why I'm still good. But I stay active. I'm one of the few guys retired, never went to work. Me and Mike [INAUDIBLE] didn't go to work when we retired. But I stay active helping older people or my buddies' wives or widows. Then, I have an entourage of [INAUDIBLE] widows who wanted to latch on. I said, "No, no, no, no." [INAUDIBLE] set in my ways. There's some nice ones. There's some they're just trying to get security. You can't blame them. [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: Well, this is [INAUDIBLE] reunion of all your old buddies, and I want to thank you for the interview.

MARVIN DELGADO: Okay. I met four guys that are here [INAUDIBLE] our company. I met three of them down there last night. The one that I met years ago showed up last – the guy in the big red outfit, glasses. He came up and hugged me and said, "Marv [INAUDIBLE]." But I'll get together – I'll try – I'm trying to [INAUDIBLE] take a group picture of us, somehow – of just the Marine Corps [INAUDIBLE]

INTERVIEWER: I think they have some plans for that.

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, I hope so because back in Tarawa [INAUDIBLE] at Camp Lejeune, last year, nobody took a group and I've been on them ever since. I asked Colonel [INAUDIBLE]. I guess somebody didn't think of it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, somebody has to think of it. Well, thank you very much.

MARVIN DELGADO: Yeah, okay. Good talking to you.

INTERVIEWER: It was a good interview.

USS AZ OHC #351 Marvin Delgado 06-14-94

Transcription Date: 09/28/09 – Transcriber: KL

MARVIN DELGADO: And like I told you, I'd be ad-libbing through. I could ad-lib – sometimes I – well [INAUDIBLE] the other night, it was only 9:00. I just went down to say hi to him and he wanted to – he showed me [INAUDIBLE]. Last night [INAUDIBLE] he started to say, "I got to leave here because I got to [INAUDIBLE]"

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'll tell you what, we've got to leave here. So I'll undo that for you. You just stay seated. Thank you.

[END AUDIO]